



ORAL FITNESS FACT SHEET

What's Your Oral Cancer I.Q.?

See how much you know about oral cancer...

1. Which of the following are early signs of **mouth cancer**? (Circle one response per statement.)

	Yes	No
a. White patches in the mouth that are not painful	1	2
b. Red patches in the mouth that are not painful	1	2
c. A sore in the mouth that does not heal	1	2
d. Bleeding in the mouth	1	2

2. Indicate whether you think the things listed below do or do not increase a person's chances of getting **mouth or lip cancer**. (Circle one response per statement.)

	Definitely Increases	Probably Increases	Probably Does Not Increase	Definitely Does Not Increase
a. Excessive exposure to sunlight	1	2	3	4
b. Eating hot, spicy foods	1	2	3	4
c. Three or more alcohol drinks/day	1	2	3	4
d. Tobacco use in any form	1	2	3	4
e. Frequently biting the cheek or lip	1	2	3	4
f. Excessive coffee drinking	1	2	3	4

3. Indicate **how much** you think each of the following increases a person's **chances** of getting oral cancer. (Select one response per statement.)

	Not at all	3x	6x	8x	10x	15x	35x
a. Cigarette Smoking							
b. Cigarette Smoking (women)							
c. Moderate Alcohol Drinking (15-29 drinks/week)							
d. Heavy Alcohol Drinking (>30 drinks/week)							
e. Heavy Smoking and Drinking							
f. Smokeless Tobacco use							
g. Marijuana use							



4. Indicate whether you think cigarette smoking affects a person's chance of getting the following problems. (Circle one response per statement.)

	Definitely Increases	Probably Increases	Probably Does Not Increase	Definitely Does Not Increase
a. Emphysema	1	2	3	4
b. Gum disease	1	2	3	4
c. Tooth decay	1	2	3	4
d. Bladder cancer	1	2	3	4
e. Cancer of the esophagus	1	2	3	4
f. Cancer of the larynx	1	2	3	4

ANSWERS

1a. **Yes.** A non-painful red or white patch on the gums, tongue, or lining of the mouth may be an early warning sign of oral cancer.

1b. **Yes.** See answer to 1a.

1c. **Yes.** A sore in the mouth that bleeds easily and does not heal may be an oral cancer (it may not even be painful).

1d. **Yes.** See answer to 1c.

2a. Definitely increases.

2b. Definitely does NOT increase.

2c & 2d. Definitely increases. Tobacco and alcohol are the leading risk factors for oral cancer. Together they account for 75% of all oral cancers.

2e & 2f. Definitely does **NOT** increase.

3a. Compared to nonsmokers, smokers increase their risk of oral cancer by about **six times**, on average

3b. Women who smoke heavily have a **ten-fold** increased risk of oral cancer, on average

3c. Moderate alcohol drinking increases risk of oral cancer by **three times**, on average

3d. Heavy drinking increases risk of cancer by **8 to 9 times**

3e. Smoking and drinking heavily increases risk of oral cancer by **35 times**.

3f. Use of smokeless tobacco increases the risk of oral cancer in general by four to **six times**. Specific oral cancers of the cheek, gingiva (gums), or inner surface of the lips (where the tobacco is placed) are **50 times** more likely to occur in smokeless tobacco users.

3g. The risk oral cancer of the mouth is nearly **3 times** higher for marijuana users, and increases with frequency and duration of use.

4a-f. Smoking **definitely increases** a person's risk of getting all of these diseases.



Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness

<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/oralfitnessmain.aspx>